



**Name:** Nneka Orji

**Job title/Occupation:** Senior Manager – Consulting, Deloitte

**School Name:** Oldfield Primary School, Greenford

**Phase of Education:** Primary

**Please tell us a little about your school:**

Oldfield is a “good” primary school in Greenford in the borough of Ealing. Over 400 pupils attend Oldfield with a high proportion of pupils speaking English as a second language, and a relatively high representation of SEND pupils. The school places strong emphasis on ethos and respect as demonstrated by the “joy through effective learning for life” motto.

**What were your initial actions when you first took on your role as the Link Governor for Employability provision within the school?**

I have been a Co-Opted Governor at Oldfield since 2014 and I took up the role of working with the school on “Ready for Work” initiatives towards the end of 2016. The need for this role was identified through a review of the school’s strategic objectives; we acknowledged the importance of ensuring pupils were given access to the wide range of career opportunities after they finished the formal part of their education. My first step was to understand the initiatives the school already had in place to support this “Ready for Work” concept. Following the review, we identified more opportunities to link up with other organisations to enhance the importance of employability. Where initiatives existed – for example, “World of Work Week” – we focused on developing these more to bring in wider range of speakers to contribute to the sessions. In other areas, we worked on establishing more formal partnerships for example working with Inspiring the Future.

**Does the school have an agreed policy and programme for the provision of work-related learning/employability opportunities to school students?**

Oldfield acknowledges the importance of provisioning for work-related / employability opportunities and this is shown in the “Ready for Work” initiatives, however there is no formal policy in place for work-related learning / employability.

**Is there a designated member of staff you liaise with on the delivery, and effectiveness of, work-related learning opportunities?**

I meet termly with the member of staff who has been designated Lead for the “Ready for Work” initiative. During these termly meetings, we focus on opportunities to embed the employability theme across the school’s programmes and curriculum. For example, we are planning for the annual “World of Work Week” and potential speakers who can visit the school during the week – and also



throughout the year to present at assembly. This staff member also liaises with the other staff to ensure that there is a focus area for each year group, for example Journalism in one year group and Medicine in another year group.

**How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the schools provision? Has the school been open to discussing this with you?**

The employability initiative makes up just one of 6-9 strategic objectives that we ask the school to report on at our termly Full Governing Body meetings. The report focuses on progress against plan and gives other governors the opportunity to make suggestions. The school has been open to discussions on the approach to evaluation and we are continuously revisiting the approach to ensure the right balance between enhancing visibility and minimising administrative activities for the staff.

**What do you feel are the benefits of schools seeking to improve their provision of employability skills learning opportunities to students?**

There are a number of benefits to be had both for the staff and for pupils when there is good provision of employability opportunities; we can see the positive impact on aspirations at Oldfield when we have a range of guests speak about their different backgrounds and careers. The pupils are exposed to careers which sometimes they have not come across or were not aware they could consider. Pupils are also able to better see how their studies can support in realising their “dream jobs” and encourages understanding around the relevance of STEM subjects.

**Have you been able to suggest any opportunities to work with external partners on the delivery of work-related learning to your school?**

Yes – my main role has been to suggest additional channels and external partners that the school could look to engage with. For example, I connected the school with one of the Consulting firms in the City (my former employer) who were running a coding afternoon. We are also looking at opportunities to engage more with local businesses and charities to showcase employability in a local context. The school has been very receptive to the external viewpoint and network that I bring.

**Have you looked into opening up opportunities within your own employment for employer engagement? If so, how was this received?**

My employer (and many others) welcome the opportunity to engage with schools and provide an opportunity for pupils to learn more about what they do and give them access to their employees. The main challenge is not identifying organisations that are ready to host pupils, but rather the practicalities of location (distance between the school and employers offering these opportunities) and sometimes funding of visits (i.e. transport costs).



**What are three key points of advice you would offer a governor seeking to support and evaluate careers provision within their own schools?**

- 1. Quality over quantity:** Develop a long list of opportunities and consider each opportunity to ensure you understand the benefits (and any challenges), but then prioritise. It is easy to try to boil the ocean but the focus should be on progressing the most impactful opportunity.
- 2. Measuring impact:** Agree the approach to measuring impact / success with the school and delegated staff member before you set off. It is important that everyone is working to the same goals and aligned on what good progress will look like.
- 3. Leverage your professional and personal networks:** The real value you can bring as a Link Governor is by reaching out to your own professional and personal networks to ensure the school can deliver against the goals. While there are organisations like Inspiring the Future that can support with employability, you will need to use your networks to facilitate some introductions and host specific events.

**What more do you feel Governing Boards could do to champion the importance of work-related learning within either primary or secondary school?**

In the same way that Standards and Wellbeing are key items on the agenda for most Governing Bodies, Employability should be included on the agenda – particularly at secondary schools. By including this as a topic to be discussed at Governing Body meetings, it gives the school and governors the opportunity to review the existing approach and also more robustly measure progress. Employability is critical and governors should be working together to develop a structured approach to ensuring pupils are developing the right skills for the future, raising their aspirations, and having access to the world of work.

**In your own words, please complete the following statements:**

*A dedicated school governor working with schools to help improve their employability provision is important because it maintains focus on the objective and broadens the network through which the employability channel can be addressed.*

*I feel I have helped the school improve its provision through challenging the approach to employability provisioning, and connecting the school to organisations and facilitating introductions to individuals that they may not have considered or had access to.*